

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA
INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF, BY

SUBJECT: WASHINGTON POST ITEM ON BURUNDIAN REFUGEES

1. POST CARRIED FOLLOWING ITEM ON MARCH 1. QUOTE, THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES' REPRESENTATIVE IN KINSHASA, ZAIRE SAID ELEVEN-THOUSAND REFUGEES FROM BURUNDI HAVE FLED TO ZAIRE FOLLOWING AN OUTBREAK OF TRIBAL WARFARE IN THEIR COUNTRY. END QUOTE.

2. DEPARTMENT HAS PREPARED THE FOLLOWING PRESS GUIDANCE:

QUESTION: DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT ON THE REPORT IN THE WASHINGTON POST THAT 11,000 BURUNDIANS HAVE FLED TO ZAIRE AS A RESULT OF TRIBAL WARFARE IN BURUNDI?

ANSWER: THE BRIEF POST ITEM APPEARS TO MISPHRASE A REUTERS DISPATCH FROM KINSHASA WHICH STATES THAT APPROXIMATELY 11,000 BURUNDIAN REFUGEES HAVE BEEN LIVING IN ZAIRE SINCE THE VIOLENCE IN BURUNDI IN 1972. THE FIGURE IS APPROXIMATELY CORRECT.

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WE HAVE NO REPORTS OF NEW TROUBLES IN BURUNDI. IN FACT, DURING THE LAST FIFTEEN MONTHS THE BURUNDIAN GOVERNMENT HAS EFFECTIVELY ASSISTED LARGE NUMBERS OF RETURNING

REFUGEES TO RESETTLE IN THEIR OWN COUNTRY.

3. REUTERS ITEM REPORTS VISIT OF UNHCR REP ALBERT PETERS TO BUKAVU AND REFUGEE CAMPS IN KIVU. REUTERS CITES AZAP REPORT QUOTE MOST OF THE REFUGEES ARE THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN THERE SINCE THEY FLED FROM THE LARGE SCALE KILLINGS WHICH FOLLOWED AN ABORTIVE COUP IN BURUNDI IN 1972 AND TRIBAL WARFARE THE FOLLOWING YEAR. END QUOTE. VANCE

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Message Attributes

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